

Improving USMC Intelligence Training

EWS 2005

Subject Area Training

Improving USMC Intelligence Training

EWS Contemporary Issues Paper

Submitted by

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February 2005

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE FEB 2005		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2005 to 00-00-2005	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Improving USMC Intelligence Training				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street, Marine Corps Combat Dev Command, Quantico, VA, 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 12	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

Introduction

The Marine Corps creed, "every Marine a rifleman," is etched in the hearts and minds of all Marines. Every Marine, regardless of occupational specialty, is trained in the fundamentals of infantry skills and tactics. Throughout history, Marines have established a reputation for prowess in combat. However, it is more than basic marksmanship and tactics or courage and tenacity in battle. It is the capability to adjust to dynamic environments and to refine changes in doctrine and tactics along the way. In 1993, the Marine Corps developed a new concept of intelligence support for expeditionary operations under the supervision of Major General P. K. Van Riper.¹ Although the intelligence community addressed a majority of the intelligence shortfalls in his plan, there was a particular human element that was not considered. The Marine Corps Intelligence mission statement implies that "more than just intelligence officers need to understand the basic concepts of intelligence support."² As a result of a lesser amount of training than intelligence officers, few staff members understand the capabilities and limitations of what the intelligence community can provide. In order to address PME

¹R.J. Buikema, "Integration of Intelligence into Professional Military Education," *Intelligence e-Prints, Intelligence Resource Program*, Federation of American Scientists (28 December 2004).

²R.J. Buikema, "Integration of Intelligence into Professional Military Education," *Intelligence e-Prints, Intelligence Resource Program*, Federation of American Scientists (28 December 2004).

shortfalls, the Marine Corps should develop a basic intelligence course for all officers that focus on common intelligence training and core intelligence competencies.

PME Shortfalls

The Officer Candidate School (OCS) does not have an intelligence course in their program of instruction (POI).³ The only intelligence-related course in the curriculum is "Cover, Camouflage, and Concealment," which may lay the foundation for a future understanding of challenges to intelligence collection.⁴ This lack of emphasis can be expected at OCS where the primary goal is establishing leadership skills and physical fitness.

Although OCS does not mention intelligence in their POI, the Basic School (TBS) does place a little more emphasis on the role of intelligence in the Marine Corps. Officially, classes on "Intelligence in the USMC" and "Introduction to Cultural Awareness for the Warfighter" complete the scope of instruction explicitly on intelligence.⁵ This is three out of over 1,500 training hours (less than one-quarter of one percent) dedicated at TBS. Add "Security of Classified Material," "Counterintelligence Awareness," and "Tactical Communications"

³ Capt. Morgan N. Savage, phone conversation, 6 January 2005.

⁴ Capt. Morgan N. Savage, phone conversation, 6 January 2005.

⁵ Vera M. Ando-Winstead, phone conversation, 6 January 2005.

(which discusses communication security and electronic warfare), and it totals six out of the 1,500 training hours (less than half of one percent).⁶ Two items deserve mention at this point. The first is that intelligence training, which is so closely interrelated with operational training that it cannot be easily boiled down to percentages and numbers. The purpose of using percentages and training hours is only to highlight the general trends. The second important item is that intelligence training is often combined with other training. Establishing listening posts/ observation posts (LPs/OPs) is a method of intelligence collection taught at TBS (though it is used as a measure to increase security), but it does not appear as a training objective in the POI. The numbers are not perfect representations of all intelligence-related training, but they do serve as general guidelines.

The Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) dedicates a total of 35.5 of 2,016 hours (over one-and-a-half percent) listed in the POI to intelligence-related classes.⁷ The highlighted theme is intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB), and instructors spend four hours detailing Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Intelligence. EWS gives attention to Marine Corps reconnaissance assets, the development of information

⁶ Vera M. Ando-Winstead, phone conversation, 6 January 2005.

⁷ LCDR. Lenny Gabion, interview, 18 January 2005.

requirements, and the unique challenges posed by asymmetric warfare.⁸ However, theater and national intelligence capabilities (NIC) are mentioned in limited detail regarding reconnaissance and collection assets outside of the Marine Corps.⁹

The Marine Corps Command and Staff College (C&SC) is a yearlong program, and its students receive a master's degree upon completion. In the core curriculum of C&SC, there are only 1.5 hours of instruction on IPB.¹⁰ The intelligence course load at C&SC is a little more difficult to estimate because there are elective and core courses, and course loads are not the same for every student. However, approximately 23.5 of nearly 2,000 hours (one-and-a-half percent) of instruction are dedicated to intelligence.¹¹ NIC and cultural intelligence receive the most emphasis, and C&SC provides an overview of how to conduct a "Red Cell." No instruction is provided on any collections, analysis, and dissemination assets located in the other services of the Department of Defense (DOD). Those who choose the "Intelligence for the Commander" elective receive more detailed instruction on

⁸ Maj. Thomas K. Simpers, interview, 7 January 2005.

⁹ Maj. Thomas K. Simpers, interview, 7 January 2005.

¹⁰ LtCol. Phillip C. Chudoba, interview, 6 January 2005.

¹¹ LtCol. Phillip C. Chudoba, interview, 6 January 2005.

the four disciplines of intelligence and how they support the commander.¹²

Common Intelligence Training

The Marine Corps can mitigate these PME shortfalls by developing a basic intelligence course that focuses on a common intelligence training package. The first portion of the training package is developing new threat scenarios that challenge how the commander manages asymmetric threats, information warfare, and the threat from weapons of mass effect. Joint Vision 2010 defines future threats as regional superpowers or "hostile states employing asymmetric means of attack."¹³ The Marine Corps should revise PME training to incorporate these new threat scenarios and limit instruction using Soviet-bloc equipment and tactics.

The second portion of the training package is learning to template enemy units. Many exercise learning objectives begin with some variation of the following phrase, "Given the situation, knowledge of the terrain, enemy order of battle and location, determine a course of action. . . ." At this point in a given situation, there is relatively little for the

¹² LtCol. Phillip C. Chudoba, interview, 6 January 2005.

¹³ Defense Technical Information Center, Joint Vision 2110 < <http://www.dtic.mil/jointvision/history.htm> > (3 February 2005).

intelligence officer to do. However this does not reflect reality. More often than not, we do not know the exact order of battle and position of the enemy. More importantly, a commander needs to know what to do if he does not know the order of battle and position of the enemy. Introducing uncertainty into USMC training, even during OCS, would develop an intelligence pull from commanders. The goal is to create an environment where a commander develops a plan to harness all available and relevant information to increase his understanding of the battlefield. This will only happen if there is a good commander-intelligence officer relationship.

The third portion of the training package is learning to develop cultural intelligence awareness. In the USMC professional courses there is an increasing mention of learning and understanding the history, culture, and taboos of the area of operations. However, there is limited mention of the importance of nongovernmental organizations and the vital role they play in any nation building, peacekeeping, or peace enforcing missions. Somalia and Haiti abound with examples of how a lack of cultural intelligence severely hampered the operational capabilities of the commander.

A basic intelligence course focused on a common intelligence training package will provide future commanders a broader understanding in the discipline of intelligence. A single two-hour class on the NIC is not enough to give a commander an idea of the capabilities from an intelligence officer. Neglecting to address the areas of cultural intelligence or to exercise commanders working in environments of imperfect information lowers the bar of expectations on the capabilities and usefulness of the intelligence officer. This results in lowering the level of importance and trust the commander places in their intelligence staff officers.

Core Intelligence Competencies

The Marine Corps will need to integrate this common intelligence training package with some core intelligence competencies to form a basic intelligence course. The first and most important core intelligence competency is IPB. This is a fundamental skill that every intelligence officer needs to know and every commander needs to know to demand. The concept of IPB is commonly misunderstood to be an intelligence-only function instead of the staff planning function that it is, but developing a clearer picture of the battlespace is both intelligence related and essential.

The second core intelligence competency is focusing on the wide range of collection and analysis assets available within the Marine Corps. Most of the PME courses address reconnaissance Marines and their capability. However, the Marine Corps also owns advanced tactical air reconnaissance system (ATARS), ground sensor platoons, radio battalions, tactical electronic warfare squadrons with tactical electronic reconnaissance process and evaluation systems (TERPES), and counterintelligence personnel. Learning about these assets provides the commanders greater insight into the intelligence capabilities under their command.

The final core intelligence competency is developing critical thinking and predictive analysis of the situation. Predictive analysis examines large amounts of data in order to identify hidden patterns and make practical decisions that impact mission accomplishment. Commanders would then be empowered to make informed decisions based upon actionable intelligence. This intelligence is both predictive in that it helps the commander anticipate enemy actions and prescriptive in delivering recommendations on how to address them.

The mission of Marine Corps intelligence is to "provide commanders, at every level, with tailored, timely, minimum essential intelligence, and ensure that this intelligence is

integrated into the operational planning process.”¹⁴ The mission statement indicates that intelligence must support the commander in the accomplishment of the command mission. The staff sections and subordinate commands will also need to be supported. The mission statement also identifies that “intelligence is integrated into the operational planning process.”¹⁵ In order for intelligence to be integrated, a strong relationship must be fostered between the operations and intelligence communities. The implication is that the operations community must understand the capabilities and limitations of what intelligence can provide. Therefore, the final step is to establish a basic intelligence course that focuses on core intelligence competencies. An intelligence course focusing on the core competencies of IPB, collections, and predictive analysis will provide a basic understanding to all officers of what intelligence can and cannot do for them.

Some may argue that a basic intelligence course is not needed. Instead, a greater emphasis should be placed on existing intelligence classes that are interlaced with the other warfighting functions. However, these classes are the source of the problem. Current intelligence-related classes provide only

¹⁴ David A. Rababy, *Marine Corps Intelligence: Officer Training in the Future*, <<http://www.loyola.edu/dept/politics/intel/rababy.html>> (9 January 2005).

¹⁵ David A. Rababy, *Marine Corps Intelligence: Officer Training in the Future*, <<http://www.loyola.edu/dept/politics/intel/rababy.html>> (9 January 2005).

a familiarization and not an understanding of intelligence, intelligence assets, or intelligence personnel. The Marine Corps needs to transform its doctrine and training to more effectively meet the complexities of the new threats challenging our nation in the new millennium. This change of doctrine and training will underscore the mindset that all Marines are intelligence collectors on the battlefield.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps needs to provide better intelligence training for future commanders so that they have a better understanding of intelligence capabilities and limitations. Oftentimes, the responsibility for the utilization of intelligence capabilities rests exclusively on intelligence officers. While individuals may succeed, institutionally we are likely to come up short. Through the development of a basic intelligence course, the Marine Corps can address these PME shortfalls and ensure that all officers receive common intelligence training focused on core intelligence competencies.

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